

Damaged goods...

What is the first step in protecting my HHGs?

The steps necessary for you to file a well-documented claim, and be paid what you deserve, starts long before your move is complete. The following are several common sense steps you can take to make a claim for damage more successful.

THE INVENTORY IS THE MOST CRUCIAL STEP IN THE PROCESS. You simply must control the packing and inventorying of your household goods. If items are not listed on the inventory, you may not be paid for them when you file a claim.

What if there are too many packers?

One of the most common complaints is that there were a lot of packers and movers and it was too hard to watch everything. Nevertheless, you or your agent must understand that you have to exercise some control and authority. If you are so overwhelmed by the packers or movers that you cannot observe your property being packed or listed on the inventory, contact your PPSO and complain. If you cannot be present, make sure your spouse or agent knows what to do and arranges for help if necessary. If all else fails, make a statement on the inventory describing the problem.

Make sure that the packers write adequate descriptions of the contents on the boxes themselves and later on the inventory. While the packers do not have to list every item, they should write the general category of the items on the outside of the boxes. The general category of each box (e.g., toys, garage items, etc.) should also be written on the inventory.

Make sure that items that would not logically be packed in a certain box are specifically listed. Examples: tools packed in a box marked clothes; a lamp packed in a box marked garage items. You may have problems if you later claim for an item that would not reasonably be expected to be found in a certain box.

Watch the carrier employee who fills out the inventory to ensure he is describing the condition of your property correctly. If you disagree with his notations on preexisting damage, write your exceptions at the bottom of each inventory sheet.

What should I do to protect my costly or irreplaceable items?

High-value items absolutely must be listed on the inventory. Prepare your own personal inventory and gather substantiation of your major items. Before your move, make a list of the major items you own, such as furniture, electronic equipment, and art objects. List the purchase prices and dates for these items and collect the documentation to prove it: paid bills, credit card slips, canceled checks, pre-shipment appraisals, etc. Then take

photographs or videotape your belongings to show the condition of the property. DO NOT SHIP this information with your household goods! Carry it with you or mail it to your next duty station. It is recommended you take jewelry, stamp/card collections, coin collections, and family heirlooms along with you in your luggage.

What if I have damage?

By following the above steps, if damage does occur, you will be in a much better position to receive the most compensation allowable by law for your loss. After everything is unloaded from the truck, you must sign the DD Form 1840. This is the time to make annotations on anything you observed while the delivery was taking place. The driver will leave you a copy of the 1840. On the reverse side of the 1840 is the form DD Form 1840 R. You have 70 days after the delivery date to note any additional damage you find on your property caused by the move. Complete the 1840 R make copies of any documentation you have from the move, and send it into your destination PPSO.